

Hello Everyone!

Thank you to all who joined us for the chat session. We are truly excited to have you at BC Law and we hope that the session was informative and useful. We were ecstatic to receive so many questions – fifty in total – and we would like to provide some additional feedback to them here.

Please feel free to reach out to any of us with any additional questions you have; we are here to help!

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Without further ado, on to the questions!

● THE SUMMER PRIOR TO 1L

- **Q: Is the Lawyering Fundamentals class worth doing?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – I did it and I would definitely recommend it. It is a skills-based course that will give you exposure to case reading and briefing, cold calls, a bit of legal writing, and exams (yes, the course has a 3-hour final exam!) before you have to start doing all of that for real. In that sense, it is enormously helpful because it is basically a simulated practice environment that allows you to get your feet wet before the semester starts.
  - **A: (John F)** – At the end of the day, it's your choice if you feel like you really need it, but I would say you're fine without it.
  - **A: (Danielle)** – It's a nice little course to introduce 1Ls to concepts like outlining, taking notes etc. If anyone is not too busy I recommend it.
- **Q: Is the BARBRI Law Preview course worth doing?**
  - **A: (John F)** – If you really want to get in the mindset and do **something** before classes formally start, do Lawyering Fundamentals over the Barbri Law Preview
- **Q: By what process do we receive our section assignment and class schedule?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – BC will email all of that to you well before school starts. You don't have to do anything for any of that.
- **Q: Is orientation when we are supposed to join student clubs, groups, etc.? Is there anything that we can/shouldn't miss at orientation?**
  - **A: (John R)** - Danielle and I are working with Administration to finalize details for orientation. It will look different this year, but I promise it will be a great introduction to the BC community! We will be in touch with more information regarding orientation activities.
- **Q: Do professors expect us to have completed certain readings before the first day of class? If so, how do we find out about it?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – Yep! You will have assigned readings for the first day of class, and you will not want to be the student who didn't know about them. Watch the famous scene from *The Paper Chase* about the first day of class; the case they

discuss – *Hawkins v. McGee* – is a real case and it might very well be the first thing you discuss in Contracts. Very good chance you will read it (or a different case) before the first day of class. Just keep a close eye on your BC email from the day of orientation until the first day of each class. Professors will provide assignments via email until everyone gains access to the course website and syllabus. Bottom line: don't expect the first day to be a simple meet and greet and review of the syllabus; expect to discuss case law from day one.

- **A: (John F)** - Retweet what Scott said. You won't be on the hook for anything outrageously complicated, but make a good faith effort to read and extract the main big points.
- **A (Duy)**: Yes, please do expect that all of your professors will have some sort of reading assignment. But while I strongly encourage you to read them all, the professors won't like make you leave the class if you didn't do the reading or anything. The readings are for YOUR benefits.

- THE FALL OF 1L YEAR (Note that although these answers are based on our experiences last year, things may be different this year due to remote learning options and faculty accommodations)

- **Q: What classes do we take in the fall vs. in the spring?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – BC will divide the incoming class into three sections, and your class schedule will depend entirely on which section you are in. In the fall, EVERYONE will take Civil Procedure, Contracts, and Law Practice (LP), which is the 1L legal research and writing course. The fourth course will either be Property or Torts, depending on your section. In the spring, you will have five classes: Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, the second half of LP, either Property or Torts (whichever you didn't take in the fall), and an elective (which you get to choose from about 10 options or so).
- **Q: What's the schedule like for the first semester? Are there classes every day?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – It depends entirely on your section, though I will say that in general you will have 2-3 classes every day. It is possible to have a heavier day (all 4 classes) but that might mean that you also have a very light day (1 class) to balance it out a bit. So it is hard to provide a definitive answer to this, though I think it is safe to say that most days of 1L will involve 2-3 class lectures.
- **Q: How long are class lectures?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – Almost all classes are 3 times per week, 75 minutes per class. LP usually meets for a shorter time – 50 minutes or so – and might meet fewer times in a week than the other courses. LP also frequently does not meet during parts of the semester (especially in the spring), usually when you have a writing deadline approaching or you are working on oral arguments. Your second semester elective is a complete mixed bag. It might meet only once per week for several hours, or be somewhat similar to your other classes in terms of frequency and duration of class meetings.

- THE SPRING OF 1L YEAR

- **Q: Does the workload change considerably between first and second semester?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – I would say yes, and I think many students would say that the first month or so of second semester is pretty rough. You might be a bit burned out still from first semester, and you almost certainly will have lost your "law school rhythm" after a long holiday break. You also have an extra class in the second semester (your elective) and LP gives you substantially more work during the second semester than it does during the first (particularly in the beginning). On

top of all of that, the 1L summer job search really ramps up in January and February. So overall, I'd say the first 6 weeks or so of the second semester are tough and a bit of a grind, but you'll quickly find your feet again and you'll get through it.

- **A: (Duy)** - For me personally, second semester was less work. Not because we had less classes (as Scott mentioned above, we actually had more), but because by this point you should have had some sort of learning rhythm down that would allow you to become a more effective law student. Of course, since it is law school the workload will still be a lot, but at the very least you won't be as lost as you might be in 1<sup>st</sup> semester.
  - **A: (John F)** - This might be an unpopular answer, but I'll say that wholesale, while second semester might be a bit of a heavier workload, it doesn't feel terrible. After going through the wringer first semester, you get your bearings pretty quickly and know how to better prioritize and get work done. Second semester is also definitely heavier on the front end, and things lighten up a bit in the back half of the year (until exams, of course).
- **Q: Do you have any recommendations for the second semester elective? Is it possible to do experiential learning for that course?**
    - **A: (Danielle)** - All the electives for spring of 1L meet a Bar Association requirement for experiential learning! You don't have to choose now and I wouldn't recommend trying, but my recommendation for choosing next semester would be to choose something that you find interesting/fun rather than something you think is "important/necessary". It's the only non-doctrinal course you'll take - so choose something you'll enjoy!
    - **A: (John F)** - The only piece of very counterintuitive advice I would give is NOT to take an elective that aligns with your long-term interests (e.g., if you're interested in practicing family law, don't take the family law elective). Even professors will tell you this, as the way the 1L elective is designed to focus on experiential components prevents you from getting a super deep dive into that certain area of law.
    - **A: (Duy)** - Electives often change so I cannot recommend them. But as for the experiential dimension, technically each elective is supposed to be experiential in some ways, so you there is no going wrong with any choice you may pick.

## ● CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT & REMOTE LEARNING

- **Q: Can you describe the cold-calling process? How does it work?**

- **A: (Scott)** – It largely depends on the professor, but I think it is possible to categorize cold-calling techniques into 3 types. First, there is true cold-calling, where the professor gives no warning or indication and just calls on people seemingly out of the blue. This is generally the most intimidating form but it was also fairly rare in my first year; only a couple of professors did it this way. The good news is that using this method generally meant that the professor would only keep you on the hot seat for a few minutes, and then move on to someone else. The bad news is that in these classes, it is entirely possible to be called on regularly, even several times per week, because the professor will cycle through the entire class pretty quickly. Second, there is what I would call "hinted" cold calling, where the professor tells you what days you *might* be called on, and on what days you definitely will not be called on. This is usually done either by an alphabetic split (e.g. last names of A-G have cold calls on Mondays; H-P on

Wednesdays, and Q-Z on Thursdays) or a room split (e.g. left side of the room is on call on odd-numbered class days, right side on even numbered class days). This can be great because you know that there are many days over the course of the semester that you cannot be cold-called (and you can relax a bit on those days), and you can also do a bit of extra preparation for days on which you might be cold-called. Finally, you have full-notice cold-calling, where the professor simply tells the entire class who is due to be cold-called the next time class meets. This sounds ideal, but it has its drawbacks. The good news is that there is no mystery; the bad news is that because the professor was kind enough to give you advanced warning, they generally will hold you on the hot seat longer and expect your answers to be more prepared and detailed, since you had time to think and prepare for it.

- o **Q: Is cold-calling as scary as it seems?**

- **A: (John F)** - I got nervous for my first cold call, and after that, you realize you were worried about nothing. The point of the cold-call is to ensure you've done the reading, test your ability to recall, and maybe push you towards a novel application of whatever you've read about. Professors aren't out to trick you or embarrass you, and you're not going to have a moment like Elle Woods in her first day of class
  - **A: (Duy)** - Is cold calling scary? It depends on two things – your personality, and your preparedness that day. If you're someone who gets nervous speaking in public, then obviously cold calling might be scary. And if you are not prepared for that day, perhaps if you weren't able to read the cases, it will probably be scary. Whatever the reason, just know that cold-calling is for your benefit. Your professor won't think less of you, and your classmates certainly won't think less about you, if you gave a wrong answer or if you weren't as eloquent as you had wanted. Cold-calling is not an audition. It's an opportunity for your advocacy skills to be sharpened. My advice is to simply be as prepared as you can be. If the professor cold-calls on you that day, then so be it. But as long as you are prepared and as long as you know what's going on that day, everything should be fine.
  - **A: (Scott)** – I think cold-calling is simultaneously extremely nerve-wracking and also probably the most overrated thing in all of law school. Like all things, it's scary at first, but you will get used to it and you will get better at it. Movies often make it seem horrifying, and while generally there is no worse feeling than fumbling your way through an answer you don't feel confident about in front of 90 of your classmates, you'll find that the majority of the pressure of it really comes from yourself. No one really remembers anyone else's cold calls; after a while, you probably won't even remember most of your own. Just remember that everyone is learning and everyone is struggling. Do your best, earnestly prepare for class, and then give an honest effort to perform on your cold calls. Your classmates will respect and appreciate your effort. Don't worry about always being right because you inevitably won't be. Even if your answer is technically correct, your professor might argue the opposite position (and will do so brilliantly) just to test your resolve and ability to think on the fly. That's part of the experience. Just embrace it, refine your technique through trial, error, and struggle, and don't worry too much about it. One final thing: never once, in any of my classes, were any of my classmates required to stand up for a

cold call. I won't go far as to say it can't happen, but it never did during my first year at BC Law.

o Q: What do people wear to class?

- A: (Scott) – Wear whatever you are most comfortable in. Do not feel compelled to dress up for class. Generally, people only dress up when they have an interview or other extracurricular activity before or after class that requires it. Otherwise, wear what's comfy.

o Q: Do professors allow laptops? If yes, do most students have them? If so, what kind?  
Are there any technical requirements needed to run certain essential programs?

- A: (Scott) – Some professors allow laptops, and some absolutely do not. It is a good idea to prepare for either scenario. The good news is that generally professors who don't allow laptops will either make their lecture materials super accessible (usually through the course website) or will assign a class notetaker or two for the semester. Their notes can be a great supplement to whatever you are able to write down in class. Most students have laptops and use them almost exclusively in classes that permit them. I'm not very technical but my laptop is several years old and worked just fine, so I'm assuming pretty much any even remotely new-ish laptop would work. If you have concerns about compatibility, I would recommended contacting technical support at the BC Law Library.
- A: (Duy) - Everything Scott said. Additionally, as a Chrome book user I want to caution any of you who also uses Chrome to get a PC or Apple laptop. Our exam software, Examsoft, will only run on either one of those OS.
- A: (Danielle) - As long as the laptop can download the Exam Soft software for finals- you don't want to have to worry about your tech failing. I went through almost the entire first semester with a tablet, no laptop (I take notes in notebooks), but needed a reliable laptop for finals

o Q: Should I take notes by computer or by hand? Any tips for taking notes?

- A: (Scott) – Totally up to you. Whatever you do best, keep doing that. Unless the professor doesn't allow laptops in class, in which case the decision is made for you. Typed notes can make outlining a bit easier because you can cut and paste. Handwritten notes can be ideal if you can't access any computer programs – including Word – during an exam but you are permitted to bring hard copy notes. So it just depends. Chat with your professors at the beginning of the semester about this; it might help you decide.
- A (Duy): Personally, what I like to do is read through my cases, brief them all, and then write all of my notes as annotations to those briefs. This way, you are both prepared for the cold calls, and it is also probably easier to follow the lectures. But as Scott said, really up to you.
- A: (Danielle) - Depends on your professor! Personally, I like typing because it is easier to make an outline if my notes are already typed. For the classes I had to hand write, I typed my notes after each week.

o Q: Are professors still willing to take office hours for remote-learning classes?

- A: (Danielle) - It differed professor to professor, but on average, yes. The professors typically are more than happy to take time to chat outside of office hours, too.
- A: (John R) - Yes they do, the teachers for the most part are great about this!

● HOMEWORK AND STUDYING

- Q: What are the actual assignments of a law student?
  - A: (John F) - Everything you do is going to be reading or writing. Besides the written assignments for LP, your only grades for your doctrinal classes are your finals (at least last year; may be different this year due to COVID), so I suppose that you could also say that reviewing and outlining is an “assignment” in a sense.
  - A: (Scott) – Read cases, read cases, read cases, occasionally write something for LP, read more cases. Pretty much all you do in your first year is read cases and do a few writing assignments for your LP class.
- Q: How many hours per night/per week are spent doing homework/preparing for class?
  - A: (Scott) – It varies by professor, but I would say between reading cases and briefing them, you’ll spend 1-3 hours per night, per class. Sometimes less if the cases aren’t difficult or the reading is short. Sometimes more, especially if you are prepping extra hard because you think you might/know you will get cold-called the next day.
  - A (Duy): I will be frank with you, it took me about 4 hours per night, depending on how ahead I am with the reading. It definitely will take you much longer the first few weeks since this is likely your first experience with reading a case.
- Q: Do you recommend studying alone or in groups?
  - A: (John F) - I’ll put a huge emphasis on making sure you do what works for you. I was never a group studier in undergrad, and I pretty much kept that same pattern going through law school. The most I would do to study with others is find one person to review our answers to practice exams with, or do quick runs through each others’ outlines. I’m absolutely in the minority, but I just know that what I did worked well for me, so I didn’t force a change that wasn’t needed.
  - A: (Scott) – Honestly, I recommend both. You will study so much that you will have to study alone at least some of the time. Groups are super helpful though, because it is very valuable to hear other perspectives on cases and issues. Given that your exams will ask you to consider all possibilities pertinent to a set of facts, having the benefit of multiple perspectives is a good thing. If you only study alone, you might only know how *you* interpret a case, or how *you* would apply a legal principle, and that can work against you. It’s also almost guaranteed that you’ll run into something at some point that you don’t fully understand (the Rule of Perpetuities and the Erie Doctrine come to mind) and you’ll probably want to work through those difficult concepts with some study partners.
- Q: Do you have any tips on forming study groups?
  - A: (Scott) – Not really; just find people you are compatible with and who add to your study experience. If your group is effective, you’ll likely spend a lot of time together and you’ll also be with them during VERY stressful periods, so stick with the people who you wouldn’t mind being around for long periods rife with stress and tension. Also, don’t form groups too early. I did that and it wasn’t much more than a social group for the first few months because none of us knew what to even study until halfway through the term.
  - A: (Duy)- Everything Scott said, and additionally, find people who you like but won’t be too distracting. I’ve had study groups where we ended up talking about other things. Do not make the same mistake.

- Q: Any tips for people who aren't particularly fast readers?
  - A: (Scott) – Take good notes and/or brief your cases really well, such that you only have to actually read the case once. If you ever have to consult the case again, you'll want to be able to pick out the important stuff really quickly rather than having to re-read the whole case.
  - A (Duy): My only advice is that you will eventually figure out how to read through the cases faster, so do not worry.
  - A: (Danielle) - I would read the briefs ALONG WITH (not instead of!) the case book to get a sense of the big picture so that you don't get lost in the details. That can help the reading go faster.

- BOOKS AND OTHER STUFF TO BUY

- Q: Should I buy or rent books?
  - A: (John F) - I've always preferred to buy books, but I always buy used if I can. Sometimes buying used ends up being a bit cheaper than renting. Also, if you buy used, sometimes the previous owner's markups can actually help you understand a case better if the previous owner has already highlighted/triple underlined the holding.
  - A: (Scott) – Totally up to you. Renting can be considerably cheaper. I like to keep books, so I bought mine.
- Q: Should I buy pencils? Notebooks? I-Pads?
  - A: (Scott) – Not sure an I-Pad is necessary unless they are your electronic device of choice. I definitely recommend having a few notebooks on hand, as well as pens/pencils. There will be times (recruiting events at law firms, for example) where you will want to be able to take some notes but not have access to an electronic device.
- Q: Does the library have the books we need for the semester available, or do we have to buy/rent?
  - A: (Scott) – The library does keep copies of casebooks, and I know several colleagues who did not buy textbooks, opting instead to scan the readings for the week each Monday at the library. That can certainly work just fine, though it requires some extra time, planning, and preparation. I would also double-check with the library as to whether or not this will be a viable option for remote classes prior to committing to not purchasing books.
- Q: How much will we spend per semester on books?
  - A: (Danielle) - I would expect to spend around \$1,000 per semester on books. I know... so expensive! But luckily some of the 2L and 3L students will sell their books on FB for cheaper
  - A: (Scott) – I'd say anywhere from \$600 - \$1,000 per semester. You can find yourself on the lower end of that scale if you rent and/or buy used books. Buying new is the most expensive option, and sometimes you can't avoid it. Used books are often in limited supply and usually go pretty quickly.

- BEING ON CAMPUS

- Q: How important is it to live near campus?
  - A: (Danielle) - BC Law students live in many different neighborhoods around Boston. Many students live close to BC bus stops and public transportation in Brighton, Allston, Chestnut Hill, and Newton. If you are able to bring a car to school, it is easier to live further away. Ultimately it is up to you and where you feel most comfortable!

- **A: (John F)** - I would say this also depends on whether or not you'll have a car, bike, etc. If you'll be relying on public transit/the BC shuttle, I'd say that you should opt to live closer to campus, or at least close to public transit. It's less time you'll spend commuting and more time you can spend working or relaxing.
  - **A: (Scott)** – Depends on who you are. I live about 30-45 minutes from campus and I love it. I find the drive, both before and after school, to be a nice time to put some music on and unwind. Living further out also means you can generally get a larger place for your money than you can closer to the city, which was important to me. That said, living further out does mean I tend to miss a lot of social engagements, strictly because I often don't feel like driving in.
  - **A: (Duy)** - If you don't have a car and is likely to rely on the BC shuttle system, then it might be more important to live near campus
- **Q: Do we need to carry textbooks around with us? How big of a backpack should I get?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – You will almost certainly want your casebook with you for every class, for reference if necessary. That doesn't mean you'll need a huge bag though, or that you'll have to carry all of your books with you at all times. The BC Law campus has plenty of lockers for everyone. You'll just need to buy your own lock.
  - **A: (John F)** - In addition to lockers, some people who drive to campus will also use their car as a "locker." You'll have just enough time even between back-to-back classes to run outside if you need to.
- **Q: When will we be able to buy a parking permit? Do I need to have MA plates to park at the school?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – You should be able to purchase a parking permit by mid August. You don't need MA plates to park in the BC Law parking lot; I didn't change my plates for several months after school started. There's also plenty of parking on campus, so you shouldn't ever worry about not getting a spot.
- **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**
  - **Q: What organizations are you a part of? Which do you recommend?**
    - **A: (Duy)** - I am a member of APALSA, and an executive member of LAMBDA and ACS. I am also a BC Law Ambassadors and will be a part of the BC Law Review this Fall. There are so many organizations so it shouldn't be difficult for you to find a couple that will fit your interests. I do want to take a quick moment to talk to diverse law students. Affinity groups will be your home. They are amazing and they host so many events and will allow you to connect with other diverse attorneys both in Boston and beyond. Please take advantage of them.
    - **A: (Scott)** – There are A TON of things you will be able to get involved in; you simply can't do everything. My advice is to pick a few things that are particularly important to you, go with those, and don't worry about the stuff you didn't do. You simply don't have enough time to do everything. You're going to have to say no to some stuff.
- **LIFE AS A LAW STUDENT**
  - **Q: Do I need a Facebook account in order to stay informed about things?**
    - **A: (Danielle)** - Definitely not essential, you'll get most/all communication about official business through your BC email. FB is more important for social activities I would say, but definitely not necessary! We also use GroupMe a lot to plan things.

- **Q: What is the overall time commitment of a law student? If I plan to treat it as a 40 hour per week job, will that be enough?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – That's a good start. Treating it like a 40 hour a week job, an 8am-5pm commitment, can be a really good strategy, as long as those 40 hours are actually spent working or going to class, and not just socializing. For most weeks, treating law school like a full time job will give you some free time, primarily on the weekends. Just know that some weeks will require more. Generally, law school starts to become an “every waking moment” type commitment about a month before finals, because at that time you probably have your big LP assignment for the semester due, and you are also starting to outline, on top of all of your regular, daily case reading. The last two weeks of the semester through finals, when you are really grinding to get your outlines done, studying, and taking practice exams, is honestly 12-14 hours per day, every day (including weekends). But that's obviously not the norm for the entire semester.
- **Q: Is it doable to have a job as a 1L? If so, is there a cap to how many hours are feasible to commit to a job?**
  - **A: (Duy)** - Depends on you. Personally, and also based on the advice I received from a lot of other law students, you should not have a job in your 1L year.
  - **A: (Scott)** – I personally would have struggled with it, but it is definitely doable. I have several friends who had a low-commitment job during 1L. Just know that it comes with a HUGE caveat. I would definitely feel law school out for a little while before trying to pick up a job, and I would not work more than probably about 10 hours per week. It all depends on who you are and what you feel you can handle. It's certainly not impossible, but it is an additional thing that takes time away from you, and there's only so many hours in the day.
  - **A: (John F)** - Agree with the 10 hours/week cap. If you can help it, try not to work first semester. Get your sea legs (law legs?) and then you'll have a better idea of what you can handle and how much free time you have to dedicate to working. Of course, opt for a job that's a bit more flexible or that has a bit less commitment. Maybe find some sort of desk job where you can spend your time on the clock studying.
- **Q: How would you describe work/life balance for students with spouses and/or children?**
  - **A: (Scott)** – There are times when you will be completely absorbed with school work and not have much personal time with your family. To help balance this out, my wife and I try to dedicate a few hours on weekends to spend together and to be with friends. There are also breaks during the semester or in-between semesters, which have allowed us to explore the city and surrounding areas and have as much fun as possible before the next stretch of classes begin. My advice is to network as much as possible and help your family establish connections. Meeting other students with significant others and/or children has definitely helped both my wife and I adapt.
- **Q: If you stick to a schedule, is it possible to have a free night or weekend occasionally, or to go out regularly?**
  - **A: (Danielle)** - Absolutely! Time management - I think a lot of people make the mistake of thinking life now has to be law school 24/7. That is not the case, even for those who do very well.

- **A: (Scott)** – Yes, for sure. In fact, I would say sticking to a schedule is probably the best way to open up some free time for yourself. The best chance you have for having some free time is to NEVER GET BEHIND on your daily work, and a schedule helps prevent that. You will find a rhythm and you'll figure out pretty quickly when you tend to have some free time, or what you need to do in order to open up some time. Also, as you get further into law school, you'll get better (and faster) at reading, researching, and writing, so the same stuff that took you hours to complete at the very start of law school won't take as long as you get a bit further down the road.

- OUTLINING AND EXAMS

- **Q: Do you have any recommendations for taking law school exams?**

- **A: (Danielle)** - Many professors will offer ungraded practice exams or send out exam questions from previous years. Law school exams are unlike any other test you'll take- practice questions are a great way to get a feel for what the real thing will look like at the end of the semester
    - **A: (Scott)** – If your professor provides practice exams, TAKE THEM!! Practice exams are often old exams that the professor has given, so they provide invaluable insight into what kinds of questions the professor tends to ask and what types of fact patterns they tend to construct. Practice exams often come with sample answers as well, which are obviously a huge help. Also, a short answer that is 100% on point is almost always better than a long, meandering answer that is 75% on point. Professors have to grade a lot of exams in a short period of time; the last thing they want is an answer that takes three pages to get to the point. Finally, don't try to impress a professor by writing about a concept that they never covered in class. Professors HATE that. If they didn't cover it in class, it won't get you any points on an exam.
    - **A (Duy):** Besides taking your practice exam (which, let me be frank, IS A MUST!), in your answers, just tailor your answer to address exactly what the questions demand. Your professors aren't here to trick you with these exams. They just want to know what you've learned. There is no point going above and beyond the questions to address issues that are not there. Keep your answers simple, and tailor them so that they answer the issues raised by their questions. If you meander and start answering other issues, at best, you're wasting time, and at worst, you might be missing the actual issues that the professors want you to discuss.

- **Q: Are exams open book?**

- **A: (Scott)** – Usually, yes. I can only think of one professor in our 1L year that gave closed book exams, and even that changed when we went to online instruction. Don't let that lull you into a false sense of security, though. Law school exams require A TON of writing. For example, our Civ Pro exam was 4 hours long and I typed as fast as I possibly could the entire time, and I STILL didn't get to one of the short answer questions. So while the exams are open book, you won't have enough time to reference your notes/outline very much. Maybe a glance or two to double-check something, but that's about it.

- **Q: Do you have any tips on outlining?**

- **A: (John F)** - You'll learn that you should outline differently for different professors. Some professors will want you to name drop cases, statutes, etc. Some professors only want to refer to Restatements. Some professors just want

- you to say what a certain rule/concept is and apply it. Once you wrap your head around what a certain professor wants, that will inform your outlining.
- **A: (Danielle)** - A lot of older students (especially your assigned mentor!) will send you old outlines you can use to create yours. Most students would tell you not to use a commercial outline because exams are teacher-specific!
  - **A: (Scott)** – Like all things in law school, figure out what works for you, and don't worry too much about what everyone else is doing. As long as the information is there and it is correct, format doesn't really matter too much, so long as it is effective for you. Everyone does outlining differently, and that's okay. Most people start about a month before finals, though some outline throughout the entire semester. I couldn't imagine even trying to outline during the first month, but that works for some people and that's okay. One tip is to review the course syllabus and the casebook's table of contents when outlining; they can really help you figure out broader themes and where readings and lectures fit within the broad scope of the course.
  - **A: (Duy)** - The only advice I have for you in terms of outlining is to listen to your professor. Most will tell you exactly what they will test you on the exam, whether explicitly, or through different things that they say throughout the semester. Pay attention, look at your notes and see which notes actually coincide with the things that the professor emphasized throughout the semester, and include those in your outline.
- **Q: Are there web-based materials, commercial outlines, or other supplements you recommend for outlining?**
    - **A: (Duy)** - If you are doing Civ Pro, please watch Richard Freer on Barbri. That should help clear up any questions you may have on the topic.
    - **A: (Scott)** – Honestly, no. I bought a commercial outline for each class during my first semester, and while they occasionally helped clarify a confusing concept for me, I didn't really use them much. Class notes and other lecture materials should form 99.9% of your outline. Supplements should only be used to clear up confusion if you have any, and even in that case, you are probably better off going to office hours or otherwise getting your answers straight from your professor rather than consulting (and paying for) a third party source. That's probably just me though. Some people swear by commercial outlines, so like everything in law school, you have to figure out what works best for you.
    - **A: (John F)** - I would say that this is also professor dependent. Personally, I would shy away from them just because it's not what your professor is telling or teaching you. I agree with Scott, going to office hours is probably a better first choice, but then if you're still confused, you could refer to the commercial materials. My one exception is that I would absolutely recommend the BARBRI Civ Pro videos if you're having trouble understanding something. I'd say those videos are hugely popular and helpful no matter which Civ Pro professor you have.

## ● GRADING

- **Q: Are students actually ranked?**
  - **A: (Danielle)** - Yes, but in percentile. For example, the top 5%. But that rank isn't the end-all-be-all of getting a job/be successful.
  - **A: (Scott)** – Yes, but if everyone knows how you are doing it is almost certainly because you were the one to spread it around (word of advice – don't!). BC does

not publish grades or rankings, and I can honestly say that our section didn't ever really discuss them, at least as far as I could tell. It's also a bit difficult for us to answer this because our class didn't get fully ranked due to having all Pass/Fail classes in the spring. But your agora portal does have a ranking field that I believe first gets filled in at the end of your first year (ours is still blank because of the aforementioned issue). That said, after the first semester, BC does release data that will allow you to determine your rough percentile ranking based on GPA. So you'll know, for example, that you are in the top 25% but not in the top 15%, but you won't know exactly where you fit in between those two numbers.

- **Q: Is the GPA curve capped?**

- **A: (John F)** - It's possible to get a 4.0, it just doesn't happen often. If you get a 4.0, we're all ears for what your secrets are.

- LAW REVIEW

- **Q: Any tips for getting on Law Review?**

- **A: (Danielle)** - Take some extra time in your schedule for your LP course, take advantage of the Westlaw citation exercises if you're not assigned them, ask members of the law review about their experience. BUT you don't have to worry about that yet, the application is after second semester
    - **A: (Duy)** - Two things. First, read through your Blue Book. Like all of it. I spent an entire week studying the Blue Book for the competition and that's how I understood how to do the citation exercise. Secondly, please pay attention in 1<sup>st</sup> semester LP. I know it could be boring at times but learning how to write an office memo in that semester will be so helpful to you for the second part of the law review competition. Not to mention of course that it will be incredibly helpful for your summer internship as well.
    - **A: (Scott)** – I have three big pieces of advice. First, take the two LP citation exams (one in the first semester, one in the second) very seriously. They count a little bit towards your LP grade but their true value is in being excellent warm-up exercises for the Law Review competition. Further, your LP professor will likely assign optional practice exercises for legal citation on Lexis – DO THEM!! You will probably hate the Bluebook the first few months of law school, but you will get more familiar with it as time goes on, and the more comfortable you are with it by the time you get to the Law Review competition, the better. Second, recognize that legal writing is very different than other types of writing. Even if you think you are an amazing writer, allow yourself to be taught in LP and be willing to make drastic changes to the way you write. Practice legal writing in LP, take a few lumps, and make a serious effort to apply your professor's feedback. Doing so will make you a better legal writer and that obviously has good implications for the Law Review competition. Third, and finally, start working on the Law Review competition materials as soon as they are released, and give yourself a manageable schedule for completing them. You've probably heard that the Law Review competition is an extreme exercise in patience, diligence, and attention to detail, and that is absolutely true. You aren't going to be able to finish it in a day or even a week. I would honestly give yourself somewhere between 100-120 hours to complete it, with half of that time being dedicated to the citation exam and the other half to the memo. Give yourself the whole two weeks to work on it, and pace yourself. Your submission will be better for it.

- **A: (John F)** - One thing you can do to help ease the burden of the writing competition is work on a personal statement. Part of the application is a 500 word statement that highlights a unique perspective you'll bring to the Law Review. There will be a presentation on the writing competition early in the spring semester, where the Law Review staff will walk you through the process. That's not a bad time to consider starting the personal statement, and it's one less thing you'll have to do when the writing competition begins after exams.